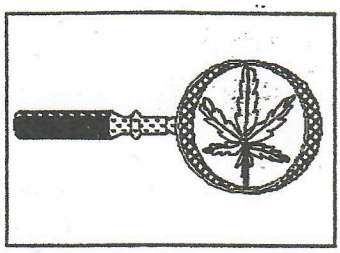
The Hemp Coalitions' 'Almost A Newsletter'

P O Box 2382
Albany NY 12220

Check *Metrolands'* Social Action Calendar for Meetings

Dec 1993/Jan 1994
Vol 4 #1



Now it can be told; 'A day trip to ski at Killington'

by Kilgore Trout

Preparation for a day of skiing begins the night before. You have to get all the clothing together and make a lunch, as the prices for anything at the lodges are astronomical. And of course there are the joints to be rolled. Because when your riding those chair lifts that force of nature-wind-will caress the occupants of the chair lift the entire ride, making it nearly impossible to roll a joint. But even with the adverse conditions there is one friend of mine who possesses the ability to deseed and roll a fatty on that ride. However, I don't have that type of ability. So I roll my fattys the night before.

And oh what fattys they are. The best part of winter and these ski trips is knowing that the growing season just past has provided you with enough smoking materials to bring you into early June on that astral plane reserved for those people enlightened enough to enjoy life, instead of fighting it at every turn. This past season yielded some of the finest buds I have seen in my twenty year love affair with Cannabis. Let me tell you that in the plant world genetics is everything. Get the right strain and you almost can't go wrong.

So with my arsenal loaded and the clothes and lunch packed its off to dream land.

S i l e n c e...then 'It's only teenage wasteland.' the alarm has done its job again, but I will have to turn it down. That alarm almost literally knocked me out of bed. As for that classic music radio, its one of the few things that will get me moving at 5:45am. That's right, it is an early start, in part because Cohoes is two hours from Killington and in part because I know what is in store for me this day and I can't wait to get to it.

Usually there are three to four people for these trips. As it happens today we have four, Alissa, Two Feathers, Billie the Pilgrim and yours truly. I drive to Alissas' home to pick her up first, I've known Alissa for about ten years now. I first meet her at a Rolling Stones concert near the end of 1981, it was the Brendon Byrne arena show. I was pulling into the parking lot that fateful day and immediately after securing my spot I was struck by a female radiance that left me unable to speak for about a minute. After composing myself I struck up a conversation, finding that she lived in Troy made me quite happy and I've known her since. With Alissa and her gear in the van its off to Billies' house to pick up her and Two Feathers,I'll tell you how I meet these two at another time.

From their Lansingburgh home its out the back way to catch Route 7 north. And yes, the first fatty is burning before we hit Route 7. The sweet aroma of northeastern New York bud waifs through the car, mingling with the sounds of a Grateful Dead tape, todays fare is from some mid-1980 Colorado show, New Minglewood Blues is caressing our ears. Then before you know it we are skirting Benningtons' business district, to save those precious moments for skiing, and moments later we are back on 7North that one and two lane ribbon from Bennington ending in Rutland, for us anyway . Of course the second fatty of the day is being fired up and its not even 7am yet. Nothing quite like these morning stones, with the sun brightening the leafless-except for the occasional pine stand-barren land of the Green Mountains for visuals. The scenery, the kind bud and the Dead keep our minds occupied and before you know it we hit the Killington access road. This in itself is a adrenalin rush and thus another joint must be offered to the gods of skiing.

Into the parking lot ('Bertha don't you come around here no more') and try for the closest parking spot I can find. At 8am there aren't many folk there to compete for that close spot, so usually its not hard to find one close.

Now its time to unload and head to the base lodge for morning nutrition, and even though I said earlier that the prices are out of site, sometimes they have a $2.95 breakfast meal deal. And after three joints the munchies are hammering away. So once fed, its time to suit up. Staying warm is the key to

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enjoying a day skiing. So we put on our assorted outfits and its out the door to the chairs. Usually we head to the Superstar quad chair but if that looks to crowded then its off to the Snowden triple chair. Anyway once on the slopes we try and find the least congested trails. Once that is accomplished and a run or two completed then its to the side of a trail to a well scouted spot. A well scouted spot will consist of sunshine, some cover from the trail and a fallen tree to provide the necessary seating. You all know what happens next!

Lunch comes around at 1pm or so. A quick lunch of not more that 35 minutes and we're back on the slopes. Repeating the pattern of the morning, with the ski day ending around 4pm.

Then its back to the base lodge for the change out of the ski toggs. Then to the car for ride home back to Cohoes. Then once home I am usually so wiped out that I don't see 8pm, and its back to the dream world. Dreaming of that next day within the next two weeks that we'll hit the slopes again.

There is something about skiing that instills a sense of freedom in you. The rush of the air past my goggled face, the majesty of the surrounding Green Mountains, the fluffy cotton-ness of the snow, only if freedom were this easily obtained. Or maybe it is! After all it was money that got me up these slopes so that I could experience this freedom. Maybe that is all we need do to get marijuana legalized. Money, and we can buy the freedom that the Constitution is suppose to deliver to us but that which we never get to see. Of course, if we do offer money to the people who hold the power to change the things that need changing for us to be free. They would probably say they don't take bribes and that we must be 'on drugs' to think that things worked that way. But we all know how things work with these people and that's really why we don't have legal pot, nobody has paid the right people yet. Oh, oh, oh, what happened to my nice little ski piece? Oh so sorry. Till next time...

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Ancient healers dried plants to make medicine. What was called drogge, was to dry plant matter. This is where the word 'drug' comes from, somewhere from the Middle English language, probably from the Germans.

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CLINTON SAYS NO TO DECRIMINALIZATION

In response to a letter from our friend in Natick,Mass.,Grave Easton, he was the organizer for the Legal Hemp in 92' campaign, well he asked President Clinton in his letter to the president for the presidents' stance on decriminalizing marijuana for its medicinal and environmental uses, Clinton responded on July 22,1993, with the following:

Thank you for expressing your views about marijuana laws.

I have received many letters from people concerned about the medical uses of marijuana and other medicinal plant sources. I strongly support research that improves the quality of health care available to Americans. However, I am against the decriminalization of marijuana.

I appreciate your input.
Sincerely,
Bill Clinton

—

UNITED KINGDOM LEGALIZES HEMP

The Home Office of the British Government approved legal cultivation of marijuana for fiber early in 1993. According to a press release from the Home Office, since other European Community members allowed hemp production, it was time to allow British farmers to compete.

According to the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, "one of the Home Office's strict regulations for permitting the reintroduction of hemp to Britian was that the plants contain negligible quantities of THC." They report that hemp yields 10-14 tonnes(sic) of dry fibre per hectare per year, from which high grades of paper can be produced. France devotes over 10,000 acres to hemp production for cigarette papers, according to *The Guardian*.

The paper quotes a local farmer, "The government has remarkably, joyously, pipped the United States to the post for the first time. It makes huge economic sense." According to a government official, "the possibilities are certainly exciting."

Thanks to the NORML newsletter *Active Resistance* for

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the last two articles.

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The most oft asked question THC gets is "What can I do to help?" Well the first thing THC will tell you is:

Become a member of NORML. Memberships support basic activities such as:

»Providing the public and the media with truthful information about marijuana and marijuana laws.
»Training activists.
»Organizing members into locally based action networks.
»Providing legal referrals for marijuana-related Problems. Supporting court challenges to marijuana laws.

The second thing THC will tell you is to: **Become a NORML activist.**

NORML Activists work to educate the public and persuade politicians that marijuana laws need to be reformed.

NORML compiles and publishes materials designed to promote successful advocacy.

Available materials include:
»The NORML Activist Packet - fundamentals of marijuana activism and the NORML Activist Program.($15)
»The Medical Marijuana Packet-background materials on the controversy over marijuana's medical properties and related litigation. ($15)

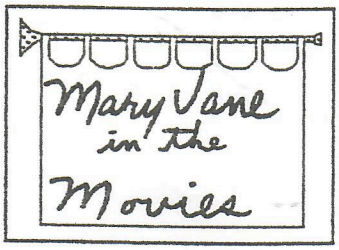
The third option is to: Become a financial supporter of NORML.

NORML can do a lot with ideas, research and the dedication of its supporters. But let's be realistic—NORML has taken on a formidable task which requires a lot of money.

NORML is dependent on annual or monthly contributions to expand its activities.

Members who pledge as little as $5 a month have a major impact on NORML's daily operational capability.

NORML has special monthly publications for financial supporters.



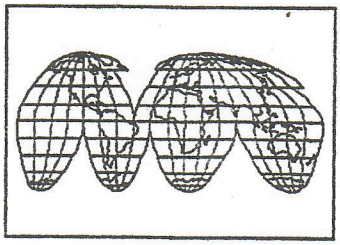
© Bull Durham-This baseball story has the Susan Sarandon smoking a joint/roach on the floor of her kitchen while she reflects on past relationships with the Kevin Costner and Tim Robbins characters.

© Amos and Andrew-1993-Touchstone-This film has a couple, very conservative in appearance, toking a doob while they have Jimi Hendrix playing on their stereo. Then later in the film the Nick Cage character is in their house for some reason and he spies the roach in the ashtray. Cage then plucks it out of the tray and calls it a hidden treasure and then proceeds to smoke it.

© Moral Instinct-This film has Bruce Willis puffing a joint at one point. I'll have to watch this again for more details of the scene.

Light at the end of the tunnel?

A new group held a recent



conference in the city of Baltimore, the group, the International Network of Cities on Drug Policy which formed out of the European Cities on Drug Policy consisted of more than fifty cities and will expand to include cities in the U.S.,Latin America and Australia.

Now cities breaking new ground in drug policy will not be working in isolation. It is this change in city policies that can strip drug policy of its characteristic platitudes and promised "toughness", thus allowing effective new approaches to be tried.

By dealing up-front with hard-core users, crimes committed in search of drugs can be reduced. No one can or should promise an end to crime because it would be totally unrealistic. If users are weaned from drugs or provided substitute substances by doctors, the criminal underworld can also be disempowered.

In my many letters to elected officials some mention of the United Nations Drug Treaty (not the proper name of the document) is used as a reason that the US can't change its drug policies, but this conference was supported by the United Nations. So it looks like there is a chance that the UN is about to realize that prohibition is not the answer to the "drug problem".

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And that the path called harm reduction is where drug policy is going. In many European cities the police have been the initial force to ask for a change from "war" to harm reduction, the police realized they were not going to solve the drug problem by breaking heads, and being the officials having contact with junkies, in talking with the junkies, the police realized that even with increased interdiction of drug shipments, the police were still faced with a growing drug using population and that too many of their fellow officers were dying in this needless war. The police realized that the best they could do is to allow the drug trade but to watch closely the trade and make sure that it didn't get in the way of the non-users, in the form of theft or violence.

In Switzerland the federal government has begun a three year drug policy experiment that will dispense hard drugs to addicts combined with medical and social service programs. This new program is designed so not to repeat the troubles that came from 'Needle Park'. The experiment will involve 700 addicts in eight cities and the addicts must be at least twenty years old and be able to show they have been dependant on opiates for two years or have suffered demonstrable health or social problems. In addition, other forms of treatment must have been tried first with no success and the informed consent of the participants is mandatory.

At the end of the three years, a cost analysis and feasibility study will be done. All participants will be evaluated whether they stay in the program or not. I can't wait to see the results from this experiment.

I know your saying to yourself "What has this got to do with Cannabis?" Well nothing. The European community has realized that there is a distinction to be made between 'hard' and 'soft' drugs. In these progressive cities, Cannabis in personal amounts is accepted. So what I'm getting around to is that if we here in the US can get our politicians interested in harm reduction policies then we will be on the road to unfettered Cannabis use(laws).

Legal in Alaska--Alaska Superior Court Judge Michael Thompson ruled on October 29,1993 that *Ravin v. State* (1975) legalizing personal use amounts of marijuana in one's dwelling is still the law because "the voters cannot change the Constitution simply by carrying the polls on a given day."

Thompson ruled in a motion to suppress evidence brought by attorney James Wendt, a public defender. Wendt represents Patrick McNeil, 33. The facts are that a police officer went to McNeil's trailer with an arrest warrant in September 1992. McNeil was not at home, but the officer saw what appeared to be a small amount of marijuana through a glass door. The officer obtained a search warrant. The room was searched and after one hour, less than one hundredth of an ounce of marijuana and a glass vial containing traces of cocaine were found.

On November 5, McNeil was offered an opportunity to negotiate a guilty plea but chose to fight the charges by focusing on the privacy issue.

The prosecution argued that the *Ravin* decision was limited by the "recrim" initiative. However Judge Thompson found that the Alaska Constitution can only be amended by two-thirds vote of the legislature and a majority vote of the voters or by constitutional convention. Thompson concluded by suggesting criteria that the Alaska Supreme Court could use to review the validity of *Ravin*. "Science marches on. Perhaps there is now in existence sufficient evidence in the scientific community to persuade the Court that the State does have adequate justification to intrude on individual privacy in the manner sought by the [the recriminalizing initiative]."

Most of the above is plagiarized from *The Drug Policy Letter* of the Drug Policy Foundation. Contributions can be made to this group at 4455 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite B-500 Washington DC 20008-2302. For $25 you will get a one year subscription to their newsletter. This foundation is, in my opinion the most important voice in the drug policy reform.

Marijuana a Gateway Drug?

The *American Journal of Public Health*, June 1993 Vol. 83,No.6, pp. 851-855 reports that alcohol and/or tobacco use generally precedes the use of other drugs, with crack generally being the last drug used in the sequence of adolescent drug use. This new

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study confirms observations first made in the 1970's, said authors Denise Kandel and Kazuo Yamaguchi.

Thanks to *NewsBriefs* for the above. Contributions to the National Drug Strategy Network, publisher of *NewsBriefs*, can be sent to 2000 L Street NW, Washington DC 20036. This is another important group that deserves your support. Phone 202.835.9075 or fax 202.223.1288.

We want to be NORML!

The Hemp Coalition is looking for five (or more) active members of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) to begin the process needed to start a local/area chapter of NORML. The new directors at NORML have streamlined the chapter process and hopefully it will be much easier to associate with this leader in marijuana reform policy. Any interested parties should contact THC at the PO BOX. It would behoove us in this area to associate with NORML so we can get more, and I hate to use this next word, mainstream. THC has to make itself more accessable to people that would not work with the present group because of its hippie/long hair/grunge identity. The Hemp Coalition will continue to exist, so it can organize events which NORML won't allow its chapters to do, ie. smoke ins. Those interested should attend the January 4,1994 ,7PM meeting at the Albany Public Library's Washington Ave. branch.

JOIN NORML

- ☐ $25 Membership Dues
- ☐ $100 Dedicated Dues
- ☐ $250 Sustaining Dues
- ☐ $500 Director's Club Dues
- ☐ $1000 Comm. of 1000 Dues
- ☐ $2500 Life Member Dues

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PURCHASE

- ☐ The NORML Activist Packet $15
- ☐ *Hemp, Lifeline to the Future* $13 (Includes S&H)
- ☐ The Medical Marijuana Background Packet $15

Total Amount:

$ _____

☐ Payment Enclosed

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Help End the Drug War by sending $12 payable to "New Age Patriot" and receive the next 6 issues and information on *International Drug Policy Day (IDPD) - the "Earth Day" of Marijuana Legalization Events.* IDPD will take place at the "Hash Bash" in Ann Arbor Mich. and *at multiple sites around the world* on Saturday April 3rd 1993. [Send $3.00 for sample issue]. Send Check or Money Order to:

New Age Patriot
P.O. Box 419
Dearborn Hghts, MI 48127
(313)563-3192 24 Hour Info Line
Green Car Ribbons for Marijuana Re-Legalization

Support New Age Patriot and you will be able to grow Marijuana as I used to do!

New Age Patriot

New Age Patriot was called "A must for serious Drug Reform Activists" High Times (Nov. 1992, pg. 27)

Compiled by Timothy Case for The Hemp Coaliton.

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Minutes of the November 29,1993 meeting of THC.
The meeting came to order and an attorney that was present was given the floor to speak about his efforts to challenge the marijuana laws in the courts. The attorney at present is splitting time between the Albany area and Baltimore, Maryland. His interest lies in defending those who are facing possession charges. He felt that it would be easier to change things at the possession level first and then move into sales and/or cultivation defenses next. And his line of defense is to include testimony by the defendant stating that the defendant knew that what they were doing was an infraction of the law but that with all the prominent people who have admitted to smcking, because in admitting that they have smoked they are in essence admitting that they were in possession of marijuana, and the defendant felt that it must be all right to do and that the defendant felt that a jury of their peers that knew of the juries power to judge the law as well as the facts of the case would never convict the defendant of any type of crime. In this manner the Fully Informed Jury can be introduced to the jury. Because the judge will not tell the jury of their powers and if the attorney tries to inform the jury of this fact, the judge could hold the attorney in contempt of court for trying to usurp the judges powers. And the attorney felt that Baltimore was a city that has been primed for this type of work by Mayor and the fact that the Mayor has been calling for a change in drug policy for some time now. All agreed at that this was a good avenue of pursuit.

The meeting then moved on to talk of joining up with NORML. The group was told that there need be five active members of NORML to start a chapter. The group was told that NORML says that if ½ of 1% of the marijuana smokers in America were to join NORML. That NORML would then be in a position to effectively push for the reform of the laws. What does this come down to in numbers. Well at the minimum it translates into 50,000 people needed to make the difference. Right now NORML has about 5,000 members. So in all of America there has to be another 45,000 or so people that the pro-legal forces can find to join. The group was told that in Schoharie county there is a core group that will apply for chapter membership very soon. And it looks like THC will be pursuing this avenue too. Those interested can attend the 1/4/94 7pm meeting at the Albany Public Library (Washington Ave branch) for more details.

Don't miss this next event. The New Yorkers for Drug Policy Reform have scheduled a debate between the 1993 Republican candidate for DA, Tom Marcelle and THC's friend Peter Christ. This debate is to be moderated by TV 13's Benita Zahn and is to be held at the College of Saint Rose in the St. Joseph Auditorium, 985 Madison Ave, Albany NY on the 19th of January at 7:30 pm. Admission is free. And it would show the pro-prohibitionists that the legalization and/or harm reduction movement really is gaining momentum. See ya there!

FAMM
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